FOREWORD and APOLOGIA

No, this is not an apology, to the handful of persons who have come in for my criticism in this report. If in future they can prove me wrong, I will offer my apologies, but at the time of writing I am convinced that they have done a great deal of damage both to the image and the economy of Hong Kong and consequently to their motherland. That is something I find difficult to excuse.

My apologies in this foreword are to readers, for this crude presentation of my report, which I suddenly decided to write about two months ago because I felt certain that former Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten in his book due out in October will paint the worst possible picture of this part of the world, about which he appears to have become an instant expert without having lived among its people or learned any of its culture. During his sojourn he was surrounded by his western advisers and those westernised Chinese who shared his political orientation.

Crude though it is, the writing of this report has not been easy. With only the two months' timetable I set myself, I made no effort to find a publisher. I knew it would be an impossible task anyhow because attractive books are not about truth, but about sensation, sex or violence. Having a sex affair with a president can sell for millions of dollars. Having a political argument with a Governor would earn nothing for the publisher. A Hong Kong Governor in confrontation with a socialist country like China will attract those who look for propaganda against "rogue" countries that do not toe the United States' line. Besides, Chris Patten has a way with words that I would not attempt to emulate.

Without a publisher, without a secretary, and with only an electric typewriter (not yet being computer-literate), I spent hundreds of hours researching Hansard reports, checking through newspaper cuttings and old correspondence, writing first by hand, then typing out, I found that my mind worked faster than my two typing fingers, leaving each page looking something like the efforts of a dyslexic. Proof-reading and correcting about a hundred closely typewritten sheets was no small job, and then remained the task of retyping and rechecking. I found myself looking forward eagerly to each new day beginning, and resented having to waste time sleeping.

When the job was finished I had to seek and pay overtime work as well as supply the paper to copy and bind. I am grateful to the one who agreed to undertake this tedious work.

But the good news for readers is that, crude though it is, this report is free of charge to anyone who sends a stamped and self addressed envelope of A-4 size to me at 55 Kung Lok Road, Kwun Tong, Kowloon. (Postage in Hong Kong is H.K.$ 8.20.)

As the number of copies that can be printed and bound by hand, is limited, it will be a case of First-come-First-served.

Elsie TU